REMARKS

The Office Action of October 20, 2005 has been studied in detail along with the references applied and cited by the Examiner. In response, selected claims have been withdrawn (claims 16-31 and 41-63), other claims amended (claims 1, 7, 9, 14, and 32), still other claims canceled (claims 2, 8, 10, and 15), and new claims presented (claims 64-69). The pending claims should be read in conjunction with the accompanying arguments and supportive patentability. Further examination and reconsideration of the application as amended are respectfully requested.

THE OFFICE ACTION

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 15, 32, 34, and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615).

Claims 38-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615) as applied to claim 32 above, and further in view of Perrow (US 6390925).

Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615) as applied to claim 9 above, and further in view of Draving (US 2275058).

Claims 5 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615) as applied to claims 1 and 32 above, and further in view of McCarrick et al. (US 5713692).

Claims 3, 13, 33, and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615) as applied to claims 1, 13, 32, and 37 above, and further in view of either Bross (US 2975667) or Turbant et al. (FR 2821906).

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 15, 32, 34, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerwien et al. (DE 10061709) in view of Euler (US 4364615). These two references are cited by the Examiner as the two common references and

are used to reject the independent claims. Additionally, these two references are used in combination with other references to reject all the other remaining claims.

Gerwien et al. describes a fastening device for a bearing of a spindle wherein the spring characteristic of the spring nut element required to hold and to adjust the bearing of the spindle is based on the shape and/or the **elastic deformability** of the spring nut element. The spring nut element fastened to the spindle produces a predetermined **elastic force**, so that the bearing of the spindle can be adjusted without play. According to the invention, tabs are provided to lock the inner ring-shaped disk section of the spring nut element to the spindle. These **tabs are bent elastically** to engage them in the thread of the spindle, and the **resulting elastic force** keeps them locked in position, so that the spring nut element cannot work itself loose. Further, as shown in Figure2, the outer ring-shaped disk section (2) and the inner ring-shaped disk section (3) form a predetermined angle with each other. This **angle can be changed elastically** by the application of an external force.

The Examiner next cites Euler to show the use of a closed outer edge. However, similar to Gerwien et al., Euler describes a retaining ring (30) including a cone-shaped, **resilient rim (32)** which defines a Belleville type spring. "The invention as claimed is intended to avoid the shortcomings of prior retaining rings by providing a retaining ring having a cones-shaped **resilient rim**. A plurality of **resilient teeth** extend radially from the rim" (refer to column 1, lines 37-40, and claims 1-3). Euler describes the advantages of its retaining ring as providing a substantially continuous circumferential contact with the shaft or housing and with the bearing; "the Belleville-type spring defined by the resilient rim of the retaining ring provides an inherently high spring rate" (column 1, lines 51-56).

Combining Gerwien et al. with Euler, and with any other of the cited references, would not result in a locking ring having an outer closed edge zone which slants at an angle towards the axis of said locking ring and a radially inner zone which slants at an angle towards the axis of the locking ring, the angle of the outer closed edge zone being different from the angle of the radially inner zone; and, wherein after installation the radially inner zone is permanently plastically deformed. Independent claims 1, 9, 32, and 64 all recite wherein after installation the radially inner zone is permanently plastically deformed. This feature is not anticipated nor made obvious by Gerwien et al. or Euler either singly or in combination. The remaining dependent claims add further elements

that distinguish from the cited references. Thus, independent claims 1, 9, 32, and 64, and all claims dependent therefrom, are allowable over this record art. Applicants accordingly request reconsideration and allowance thereof.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants enclose with this Amendment an Information Disclosure Statement complying with 37 CFR 1.98

All formal and informal matters having been addressed, this application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to that effect is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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